

Furman Magazine

Volume 56
Issue 1 *Spring 2013*

Article 19

4-1-2013

North Village geothermal project nears completion

Furman University

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Recommended Citation

University, Furman (2013) "North Village geothermal project nears completion," *Furman Magazine*: Vol. 56 : Iss. 1 , Article 19.
Available at: <https://scholarexchange.furman.edu/furman-magazine/vol56/iss1/19>

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Crossing the blue-red divide

PRESIDENT OBAMA and Mitt Romney could probably learn something from these guys. Better yet, Mitch McConnell and Harry Reid. Even John Boehner and Nancy Pelosi — although given their genders (and Furman's housing rules), that might be a stretch in this case.

Still, if 2013 Furman graduates Thomas Hydrick, executive director of College Republicans, and Ben Saul, president of College Democrats, can become friends and roommates, maybe — just maybe — there's hope for the gridlock, hostility and inter-party bickering that mars today's political landscape from the South Carolina state house to Washington, D.C.

Can't we all just get along? Two Phi Beta Kappa Furman gentlemen from the Palmetto State have shown it can be done.

In past years on campus, relationships between groups of opposite political persuasions had not always been particularly cordial. Saul noticed the tension as early as his freshman

year, and has been praised for his efforts to bring groups together to co-sponsor events that promote an exchange of ideas.

Since 2011, the College Democrats and College Republicans have joined to organize programs and panel discussions concerning issues such as the federal budget, school safety, and U.S.-Mexico relations, which featured former Mexican president Vicente Fox. And whether they've meant to or not, through their bipartisan example Hydrick and Saul have served as models for everyone on campus.

Although they won't have each other to banter with next year, they're ready for the

next steps in their lives. Hydrick, a history and political science major from Columbia, plans to pursue a Master of Philosophy degree in historical studies at England's Cambridge University, then enroll at Vanderbilt University Law School. Saul, a Greenwood resident focused on poverty studies, is spending the summer working for the Office of Rural Outreach at the U.S. Department of Education. In the fall he'll be a graduate fellow with Furman's Richard W. Riley Institute, working at Scott's Branch High School in rural Summerton, S.C., part of the state's "Corridor of Shame." He plans to attend graduate school and become an educator.

North Village geothermal project nears completion

THE \$4.92 MILLION North Village geothermal project, which will provide a new method for heating and cooling the on-campus apartment complex, is scheduled to be virtually complete by the end of August.

A geothermal heating and cooling system uses the water stored amid the earth's constant underground temperatures to heat residences in the winter and cool them in the summer. "Normally a heating and cooling system exchanges heat by using air," says Jeff Redderson, head of facilities services. "Instead we're using

the earth, pumping water through wells and releasing heat to and from the ground."

Furman received a \$2.5 million grant in 2009 from the U.S. Department of Energy to pursue the project. The university matched the grant. The system features 24 heat pumps and 20 wells for each apartment building. Each well is 517 feet deep.

Along with improved energy performance, the geothermal system will eliminate the use of outdoor condensing units, reduce the university's carbon footprint and cut back on

maintenance needs. The mechanical equipment could last up to 20 years, with the wells expected to have a lifetime of 50 years.

One building already on the system has reported a 32 percent reduction in kilowatt hours monthly. The project is expected to save the university more than \$2 million over the next 20 years.

All but one building in the complex will be on the new system by the end of August. North Village consists of 11 buildings and accommodates 1,020 residents.